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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-seventh session
9 June-3 July 1997
Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mrs. Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

Addendum

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 (item 4 (a))

Section 19. Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean

1. At its 22nd meeting, on 25 June 1997, the Committee considered section 19, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

Discussion

2. Many delegations expressed their support for the programme and acknowledged the positive impact of the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in many areas of development and the prestige that it enjoys in the region as a centre of excellence. Some delegations welcomed the quality and quantity of the publications programme and stressed the importance of assuring wide distribution for all publications.

3. Some delegations considered that the level of both regular budget and extrabudgetary resources was not adequate to cover the extensive programme of work contained in the section. They were also concerned about the number of posts proposed for abolition and the negative impact this might have on the capacity of ECLAC to implement its programme of work. Others stressed the need to ensure that sufficient regular budgetary and extrabudgetary resources are allocated to the subregional headquarters of ECLAC, in particular the Caribbean.

One delegation expressed the view that, given the economic and social problems facing the Latin American and Caribbean regions, ECLAC should now place greater emphasis than hitherto on operational activities that address the priority concerns of the region. Some delegations emphasized the importance of maintaining appropriate coverage of social equity issues. Others were concerned about the low level of resources available for environmental issues.

4. One delegation noted with concern the increase of the overall resources requested under the section and considered that resources should decrease as a result of the streamlined structure derived from the reform process. Some delegations stressed that further streamlining might hinder, in the long run, the full implementation of the Commission's mandated activities.

5. Some delegations supported the streamlining and restructuring reflected in the work programme. Several delegations supported the thrust of the proposed management pilot scheme and noted its potential application to other areas of the Secretariat. Other delegations welcomed the dialogue between ECLAC and member countries in the setting of priorities within the work programme. Other delegations welcomed the recent effort to improve the dialogue between ECLAC and member countries in the setting of priorities within the work programme and expressed the hope that a constant dialogue would be maintained on such a setting of priorities as well as on the implementation of the decisions adopted by ECLAC on 6 June 1997 regarding the management pilot scheme.

6. Some delegations questioned the legislative mandate justifying the involvement of ECLAC in activities stemming from the Summit of the Americas held in Miami.

Conclusions and recommendations

[7. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it approve the programme narrative of section 19, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, with the following modification:

In paragraph 19.58 (c), the word "CARICOM" should be added at the end of the paragraph.]